DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 109 888 FL 006 275

AUTHOR Neustupny, J. V.
TITLE Sociolinguistics and the Language Teacher. Linguistic Communications: Working Papers of the Linguistic Society of Australia, No. 12.
INSTITUTION Linguistic Society of Australia.
PUB DATE 74
NOTE 26p.; Paper presented at the Seminar on Language Teaching: Problems and Solutions (La Trobe University, April 14, 1972)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.95 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Applied Linguistics; Cultural Awareness; Language Development; *Language Instruction; Language Teachers; Language Usage; Language Variation; Linguistic Competence; Linguistics; Linguistic Theory; *Second Language Learning; *Sociolinguistics
IDENTIFIERS *Communicative Competence

ABSTRACT

Prior to the development of modern sociolinguistics the immediate contribution of linguistics to society as a whole was negligible. Without the further development of sociolinguistics, the situation will not change radically. In order to arrive at a more useful system of linguistics, linguists must realize that this situation does not result simply from the unwillingness of the non-linguist to accept the fruits of their work but has its roots in the character and development of modern linguistics itself. Sociolinguistics can be characterized as having three stages: the language and society approach, the language variation approach, and the communicative competence approach. The last-named approach as a new discipline can be expected to contribute greatly to foreign language instruction, especially in: (1) defining the nature of language teaching; (2) defining the foreign language use situation; and (3) providing a general model of communication and making the language teacher aware of the necessity of teaching communicative competence. (AM)

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SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND THE LANGUAGE TEACHER

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1. LINGUISTICS AND SOCIOLINGUISTICS
   - Linguistics - for whom?
   - Structuralism and sociolinguistics
   - Sociolinguistics 1 (Language and Society Approach)
   - Sociolinguistics 2 (Variation Approach)
   - Sociolinguistics 3 (Communicative Competence Approach)
   - The term sociolinguistics
   - Sociolinguistics and language teaching
2. DEFINING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING
   - Language teaching as solution of language problems
   - Foreign and native language teaching
   - Why do we teach languages as we do?
3. THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE USE SITUATION
4. TEACHING OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE
   - Teaching of "cultural understanding"
   - Content rules

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1. LINGUISTICS AND SOCIOLINGUISTICS[1]

Linguistics - for whom?

Throughout its modern history linguistics have never ceased to emphasize the importance of grammar and linguistics as a whole, both for the language teacher and learner and for the community at large.

It would be unfair to deny the role of linguistics in the preparation of texts for foreign language teaching, without questioning the elegance of its paradigms or rules, the aesthetic qualities of its alegebraic arguments, and the satisfaction it is able to render to the linguist. Still, I wish to claim that prior to the development of modern sociolinguistics the immediate contribution of linguistics to society as a whole was negligible and that without the further development of sociolinguistics the situation is not going to change radically. It was the next speaker this evening, Dr. T. Quinn, who a few years ago, like myself, from within linguistics, questioned our contribution to foreign and especially native language acquisition, to arrive at the most pessimistic conclusions (Quinn 1967). Indeed, with few exceptions, linguistics can make no legitimate claim for contributing in any significant degree to native language acquisition: acquisition of the native language continues to be automatic, and knowledge of the order "don't say ..., say ...." can be, and actually is, being transmitted without the intervention of linguists. Likewise, in foreign language acquisition, linguists cannot but accept the fact that most frequently knowledge is attained not only in the absence of modern

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[1] Since this paper was presented at the seminar Language Teaching : Problems and Solutions (La Trobe University, 14th. April 1972), the theory of sociolinguistics and our understanding of language teaching have made considerable progress. Nevertheless I have decided to release the present paper without substantial revision. I hope that even in the present form it may be of some use for teachers of languages who are approaching the topic for the first time. (J.V.N., 15.8.73)

linguistics, but in the absence of any more or less rigorous linguistics at all. And the system, we must admit, works.

In order to arrive at a more useful system of linguistics, the linguists must realize that this situation does not simply result from the unwillingness of non-linguists to accept the fruits of their work but has its roots in the character and development of modern linguistics itself.

STRUCTURALISM AND SOCIOLINGUISTICS

My intention is not to outline the whole history of modern linguistics. Let us realise however that in the late twenties the discipline developed from the early modern, PRE-STRUCTURAL, stage characterised by the symbiosis of philology and school grammar into the modern stage of STRUCTURAL linguistics. The development took place independently both in Europe and America, a fact which indicates that something more than a mere chance was involved. Undoubtedly new modes of social thought in general, and new attitudes to language and communication were instrumental in the process. Structural linguistics belongs to the epoch in which the knowledge of limited cross-sections of the human society starts being socially useful, while a knowledge of the whole still escapes the level of utility. The emphasis in the social sciences is still rather on the delimitation of disciplines than on wiping off the boundaries. The approach is empirical rather than theoretically systematic, and the basic attitudes to communication continue to be derived from the narrow Western communicational experience.

Structural linguistics developed thus as a narrowly utilitarian discipline, marked by an exaggerated feeling of independence. It was the referential function of language, i.e. the capacity to refer to things and ideas, that was most useful about language, and no wonder it was this fact which served as the criterion for deciding what really mattered. Some facts of speech acts were designated as relevant, others

as irrelevant for linguistics (cf. the European langue: parole opposition). Language defined in this narrow way was an independent closed system and it was undesirable to relate it to any facts outside its own sphere. Further, because the Western speech communities, which served as the basis of the linguist's experience had well established standard languages and decreasing dialectal stratification, the study of linguistic variation did not develop. And it was again this restricted communicational experience which corroborated the exclusion of the "irrelevant" features of speech from linguistics: in the West such components of communication as topics, networks, gestures etc. were not sufficiently different to justify their inclusion into linguistics. No wonder that as far as language teaching is concerned this situation resulted in the conviction that it was the acquisition and maintenance of the grammar/lexicon/phonology features of the standard languages that really mattered, and that the other components of communication were universal, "natural", and did not require attention.

POST-STRUCTURAL linguistics, the constitution of which has still not been finalized, is developing on the basis of a new social and linguistic situation. The usefulness of the understanding of mechanisms of the society as a whole calls for a theoretically systematic approach which will cross boundaries between disciplines. Utility is defined in a much wider sense in which more than the bare "distinctive features" matter. Details of structure, down to its vague points, attract attention. And attitudes to communication are increasingly based on the experience of extended international relations.

Post-structural linguistics can, of course, be traced back to some older currents in American (Sapir and his followers) and European linguistics (Prague School : Havránek, Skalička etc., J. Firth and his school), but the main development which took place in the sixties can be seen in generative grammar (mainly

in its post-Aspects stage), and in sociolinguistics. When speaking about sociolinguistics we should realise that at least three currents can be distinguished within the field.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS I (LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY APPROACH)

Structural linguistics established language as a highly arbitrary system with a minimum relationship to cultural and social facts. While it is true that the decision whether a particular language has 4 or 6 grammatical cases can not be related to any outside factor, and while certainly the folk-linguistic assertion of "thinking in a language" can not be given a rigorous interpretation, there are undoubted examples of the determination of grammatical rules by social factors. Perhaps the best known is the case of the TU/VOUS distinction (Brown and Gilman 1961), systems of address in general, kinship terminology systems, linguistic borrowings etc. The discussion of these questions, along with modern contributions to the evaluation of the Whorfian hypothesis (cf. Hoijer 1954, Fishman 1960, Hymes 1966 etc.), and much of the so-called anthropological linguistics enter into what I propose to call Sociolinguistics I.

Sociolinguistics I, as it historically developed, did not emphasise the importance of linguistic variation and remained fully in the sphere of grammar/lexican/phonology, i.e., the traditional study of langue.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS II (VARIATION APPROACH)

During the sixties the Language and Society Approach developed into a field of studies which can be called the Variation Approach, or simply Sociolinguistics II. While structural linguistics deals primarily with the speech of "an ideal speaker-listener", the Variation Approach in sociolinguistics emphasises that speech communities and individual speakers usually employ for each specific purpose one of a number of variants, the selection of which depends on the properties of the speakers, listeners, situation etc. The notion of

a variety, which replaces the traditional language or dialect, and of a variable (cf. Labov 1972), is crucial for this type of sociolinguistics. In its study of variation, sociolinguistics is interested in the types and the roles of varieties within speech communities, the degree to which variants can be grouped into distinct varieties, problems of selection of a variety for a specific function, e.g. the selection of a standard language, problems of language policy and planning in general etc. Sociolinguistics II is also interested in the extralinguistic factors which cause variation and overlaps accordingly with Sociolinguistics I. One of the trends which has developed from Sociolinguistics II strongly attacks the static view of language and proposes a new dynamic science of language (cf.Bailey 1972,). This programme closely connects with the earlier programmatic interest in indeterminacy in language (cf. Neustupný 1966).

Already the Language and Society Approach had diverged significantly from the structuralist linguistic thought, but the study of variation represents another important step toward post-structural linguistics. The recognition of factors on the basis of which varieties are selected and grouped, requires another substantial step away from the self-contained langue of the previous period. At the same time, the usefulness of linguistics sharply increases: this is why most readers of Labov's investigations on social variation of speech in New York, the recent studies of Negro English, or some contributions to language policy (cf. Rubin and Jernudd, eds., 1971) are likely to feel that here at last is a linguistics that is capable of serving a good purpose.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS III (COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE APPROACH)

It should be noticed that Sociolinguistics II as a whole still confines its interest basically to the study of variation in grammatical, phonological, and lexical phenomena and does not

normally embark on the problems of other rules of communication. Useful hints for a wider conception of "language" are contained in the traditional disciplines of rhetorics, poetics, stylistics, and areas of research of the type found in Japanese "gengo seikatsu" (linguistic life) studies. As forerunners of the actual Communicative Competence Approach we can name Firth, Trost, Skalička and others, but the first investigations for which the label Sociolinguistics III seems to be appropriate are paralinguistics and kinesics which included the study of features such as intonation, voice timbre, gestures etc. It later became obvious, thanks especially to the "ethnography of communication" (cf. Gumperz-Hymes 1964), that further dimensions must be explored if we want to explain the whole of the human competence to communicate.

Most models of language in the wide sense of the word which have been available so far can be traced back to the now classical proposal published by Hymes in 1962, (for the most recent revision cf. Hymes 1972). In this paper Hymes suggested the necessity to account for each factor in the process of communication: sender, receiver, message, channel, code, topic and situation. Notice that narrowly linguistic models, such as the model proposed in the first decade of transformational grammar, only account for one extremely limited section of verbal communication conceived in this way: they treat only almost the lowest level of the message (sentence), the smallest units of the topical level (lexical meanings), and one type of "channel" (the sound/written medium of language). The fact might seem to suggest the superiority of sociolinguistic models over the narrowly linguistic ones. We should however not forget, that the Communicative Competence Approach is still in its beginnings and that the degree of theoretical systematization and formalization of its models has so far not reached very definite values (DeCamp 1969). Some attempts at formalization have been presented by Ervin-Tripp (1968) and Key (1970) but an overall theoretical model is still to be produced. Without attempting to suggest my own model of communicative competence I shall demonstrate

in the following paragraphs which areas of communication are covered by Sociolinguistics III.

(1) When do we and when do we not communicate?

Before an act of communication commences each social situation consists of a large number of features that provide the input of the communicative act. Rules of communicative competence are rules which decide what features of the input will be communicated and in what way. Obviously, the first set of rules, which I propose to call switch-on-rules, determines whether communication takes place at all. It is not the only function of communication to convey useful messages: communication also takes place in situations in which there is no content to be conveyed, by virture of what has been called the contact function: if for instance A and B stay together for some time at the same place, communication is necessarily switched on, even if there is virtually nothing in the input to convey. While this is the case in English, it may be not so in some other systems of communicative competence.

(2) When and where does communication take place?

Once the decision to communicate has been made setting rules are applied in order to specify the time and place of the communicative act. Some social times do not allow communicative acts at all, e.g. at night, and a thorough study of the daily, weekly, etc. communication cycles reveals that even if we exclude such obvious constraints the time for a specific communicative act is far from being free, and far from being universal. The same is true about place: again, some places are unsuitable, and some are scarcely suitable for communication. There is the story of the prime minister who refused a bribe when it was offered to him in the toilet and only accepted it in a more customary setting. When in the British system A decides to invite B for dinner, he is bound by certain time rules - the invitation should be

communicated at least several days before the event; he is not however restricted as far as the time of the day is concerned, except for the general exclusion of telephone calls during the usual meal hours. There are not many restrictions as to the place of the invitation act. The invitation will however preferably be attached to other communicative acts.

(3) Who and in what capacity takes part in communication?

This question is decided on the basis of personnel rules. The dinner invitation from A to B would usually be conveyed by Mr. A to Mr. B, by Mrs. A to Mrs. B, or occasionally among the opposite sexes if neither of the previous two dyads reaches the same degree of solidarity as the hetrosexual one.

Personnel rules subcategorize the speakers and listerners from various points of view (e.g. role and status) and determine the type of networks they constitute. Children, for instance, can be accepted as a completely different category of speakers and listeners from the adults or they can be treated as basically identical with adults and subject to the same constraints on communication as anyone else. It has become more and more apparent recently that the categories of speaker and listener, and sometimes the whole network, can not be disposed of if we want to formulate grammatical rules. It is, for instance, addressees, not nouns, that determine the selection of either TU or VOUS, and obviously no grammar which ignores this fact can generate any sentence containing one of these pronouns (Neustupný 1972).

(4) Which variety will be used?

Varieties considered in Sociolinguistics III are not only varieties of grammatical rules but of all rules of communicative competence. The invitation can, for instance, be communicated either in an informal

or formal variety. Other types of varieties, often discussed in sociolinguistics are the restricted and elaborated codes (Bernstein).

(5) How extensive will the message or messages be, and what will be their structure?

The party invitation can take the form of a routine (e.g. a spoken routine, a written routine: a card or a letter) or have a freer form. It will usually consist of several sentences and these, in their turn, will be structured in a certain way.

The frame, or syntagmatic, rules govern the selection of such frames as communication cycles (not every day has the same communicative components, cf. the difference between a Wednesday and a Sunday), communicative events (a sermon, conversation etc.) paragraphs, sentence types etc. Sometimes the same content can be expressed by frames of widely differing extension: a series of lectures, one lecture, a chat, or simply a gesture ...

(6) What will be the content of the message?

In inviting a person for dinner the pre-communicational input may contain our intention to use the opportunity to persuade the guest to agree to our proposal: this information will however usually be blocked by the content rules and will not appear in our message. On a different level the content rules, as pointed out by S. Kaldor, block the use of some lexical meanings: in most situations we are allowed to use the word dinner which would make the message too formal and pompous. In some languages any concrete indication of the hour or the intended type of party (meal, refreshment, drink only etc.) would make the invitation sound formal.

(7) What medium will be used for carrying the message?

The invitation for dinner can be in spoken or written language; we could convey the same content by drawing a picture, but this medium would certainly carry further information about the idiosyncratic features of the sender. If spoken, the message can be direct (we can, for instance, wait for a situation in which direct spoken communication is possible) or indirect, i.e. by telephone. If writing, we can decide between an invitation card or a letter, with a difference in the degree of formality, but the channel, or level, rules do not usually allow the use of telegrams.

No act of communication can take place without a set of rules similar to the rules outlined above. Our choice may and often does vary, but we must decide whether to communicate or not, when and where to communicate, to whom and in what network to communicate, which variety of communicative competence should be used, how extensive and structured our message will be, what content it will convey, and by what formal means.

From the viewpoint of sociolinguistics, the traditional conviction that it is language in the sense grammar/lexicon/phonology which enables us to communicate turns out to be a most unfortunate simplification. It is however not difficult to trace the historical roots of this basic linguistic fallacy. While grammars of the contemporary European languages are considerably diversified the remaining rules of communicative competence vary only marginally in most of the Western speech communities and this fact enables relatively effective communication even if switching only from one grammar to another. It is in the case of very distant systems of communicative competence (e.g. English-Japanese) where the difference first assumes full visibility and calls for a policy. Once discovered, the enormous range of variation in the non-grammatical components of communicative competence even between neighbouring communities

and within communities can not escape the attention of the linguist (for Australia see e.g. Clyne 1972, p. 107 et sequ.).

I wish to suggest, for reasons which can not be discussed here in full, that the "language" of traditional linguistics, i.e. grammar/lexicon/phonology, constitute the central sub-system of communicative competence, and that the other rules cluster into several peripheral sub-systems marked by varying distance from the centre. The transition from the centre to the periphery is however gradual. The terminology central/peripheral should not be interpreted in the traditional sense relevant/irrelevant, and should not result in lesser attention to the more peripheral components.

We must accept the fact that Sociolinguistics III as it has historically developed, concentrates on the peripheral components of communicative competence without emphasising the structural unity of the periphery and the centre. Nevertheless, the Communicative Competence Approach in sociolinguistics provides the most encompassing model of human communication presented so far, a model capable of incorporating not only Sociolinguistics III and I, but also traditional linguistics. This is why D.H. Hymes, the foremost representative of this discipline, sometimes uses the term (socio)linguistics with 'socio' in brackets.

THE TERM SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Historically speaking, the beginnings of Sociolinguistics I should be placed before the appearance of the contemporary Variation Approach and Sociolinguistics III. The term sociolinguistics was still unknown at the beginning of the sixties and this may be why there may be some hesitation over whether Sociolinguistics I should be covered by the term initially applied mostly to the Variation Approach. Sociolinguistics III is still more difficult name: terms used include anthropological linguistics, ethnography of communication, the study of communicative competence,

and it is only more recently that the term sociolinguistics has been extended to include also this type of investigation as well. While it may be true that the terminology used for the various approaches to sociolinguistics varies greatly, the affinity of all such studies has never ceased to be clearly perceived by the researchers. An inspection of the representative books of reading in sociolinguistics (cf. Appendix I) will suffice to show that papers relevant to all types of sociolinguistics - whatever they may be called - can be, and are, accommodated within the same framework.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Whatever the terminology may be, the new discipline provides sufficient evidence of vitality and self awareness to secure a firm place in the future. What may however prove to be of greater validity than the sociolinguistic theory itself is the possible impact of the discipline on the field of language acquisition and language problems, where sociolinguistics has incomparably more to say than any linguistic discipline in the past. In the following I shall limit my attention to the field of foreign language teaching. While doing so I wish to emphasise that the contribution of sociolinguistics to language teaching is a program for the future. Very little has been achieved so far, but this is not surprising if we realize that this is not the first time that many years are needed in order to put a new theory into practice.

It can be expected that the contribution of sociolinguistics to language teaching will consist, among other, of the following three major parts.

(1) Sociolinguistics is the first discipline to provide a simple and lucid framework for the understanding of the nature of language teaching. Language teaching is conceived as a type of communicative interaction, defined by its specific aim and the specific set of rules governing the interaction. This means that models developed for the

understanding of communicative interaction in general can be employed also for language teaching. I shall deal with this aspect of the problem in section 2 of this paper.

(2) Sociolinguistics suggests that along with the language teaching situation there exists another type of related situation, the situation in which a foreign language is used, and that the study of this foreign language use situation has basic relevance for the language teacher (see section 3).

(3) Thirdly, by providing a general model of communication, sociolinguistics makes the language teacher aware of the necessity to teach more than simply the grammar/lexicon/phonology of language and provides at the same time a detailed typology of the fuller object of language, or better - communication, teaching.

2. DEFINING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

LANGUAGE TEACHING AS SOLUTION OF LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

Sociolinguistics is the first linguistic discipline which provides a theoretically valid framework for the understanding of the nature of foreign language teaching.

For sociolinguistics language teaching can be defined as the solution of a language problem, the directed acquisition of competence in a system of communication.

By saying <u>directed</u> I wish to distinguish this type of language acquisition from such learning that does not imply separate learning situations, in other words the automatic type of acquisition occurring for instance when a child learns its mother tongue or a foreigner acquires the language of his environment owing to his participation in practical activities in the community. The boundary between directed and automatic acquisition should however not be overemphasized. It has been

confirmed by studies of the child's acquisition of language that a child often drills and rehearses, and it is obvious that in other respects, too, directed and automatic acquisition share a number of common features.

The above definition characterizes language teaching as an instance of the solution of language problems. This is a fact most useful for the understanding of language teaching because it renders available models developed in sociolinguistics for the treatment of language problems. The models can be summarized into three phases:

(1) Recognition of problems
(2) Implementation of decisions
(3) New interaction of feedback

As with the solution of other language problems when speaking of language teaching we must distinguish between

(1) the treatment process itself, based on a system of rules which are not necessarily identical for all communities, and which may or may not be conscious, and

(2) the accompanying systems of beliefs and attitudes about language teaching, which are applied during the treatment cycle, and which are naive or rigorous to a varying degree.

There may be considerable discrepancy between language teaching as generated by the objective rules of the treatment process, and the attitudes of the community. Some languages may be taught, i.e. teaching may be generated by the system, without necessarily any beliefs or attitudes being connected with the process (French in Australia), while other languages may not be taught although there is a considerably strong concensus that they should (Japanese in Australia). The community may believe that a language is studied because the study develops the student's intellectual powers, helps "logical thinking" etc. but these are not necessarily the real determinants of the actual processes.

A rationally conceived treatment of language problems, in our case of language teaching, aims of course at maximum agreement between the objective rules and subjective attitudes. It also aims at a most rigorous system of attitudes which would imply identification of the maximum number of problems, most effective implementation, and most informative feedback.

FOREIGN AND NATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

It will be noticed that the sociolinguistic definition of language teaching does not touch the distinction often made between foreign and native language teaching. Although this traditional distinction may seem justified and useful it is difficult to maintain it without further inquiry into the problem. Modern sociolinguistics has demonstrated that the traditional distinction between a native and foreign language is most difficult to define. Being based on a limited experience of the well developed European communities, it fails to account for communities which employ concurrently a large number of mutually distant varieties (e.g. Modern and Classical Arabic) or varieties of completely different origin (Tamil, Hindi, English). The traditional terminology also fails to recognize that so called "native languages" themselves consist mostly of a considerable number of varieties, some of them characterized by a higher degree of distance than two completely different "languages".

Various definitions of the native/foreign distinction may be attempted. If only the first automatically acquired variety is native then English in India is foreign, but so is Written English for any clearly "native" speaker of English, because it is neither acquired first, nor automatically. Should native mean "acquired before the end of the language constitution period", it would be necessary to introduce also additional proficiency criteria, because otherwise my Latin would be native; on the other hand Written English of an Australian migrant, however perfect

it may be, would be foreign if acquired in adulthood. The additional criterion of distance is invalidated by the existence of varieties which are closer to a foreign language than to the native standard.

Whatever the final solution of the problem may be, it is clear that the foreign: native opposition is a matter of degree, not a sharp distinction. And if we look at actual teaching methods a similar continuous scale from clearly foreign to clearly native may be observed. If we wish to achieve better results it will be necessary to minimize the contrast rather than to sharpen it. Native language teaching can profit from some of the techniques developed for the teaching of foreign languages, while certainly in order to achieve competence close to native the native methods of acquisition must be carefully watched. This is true at least for those varieties which rely on native directed acquisition (acquisition of literary language, etc.).

WHY DO WE TEACH LANGUAGES AS WE DO?

I wish to exemplify the possible contribution of sociolinguistics to the theory of language teaching in the particular case of implementation of language teaching rules, i.e. the problems of teaching methods.

Traditional language teaching discusses teaching methods such as the direct method, grammar-translation method, or the audio-lingual method as a series of improvements moving from the point I-don't-know-how to the point of Now-I-know-it. The sociolinguistic approach, rather than committing itself to a straightforward evaluation, first asks about the determinants of the teaching methods. The results of this investigation reveal that far from being a simple technical improvement, the rules of teaching are strongly influenced by, if not clearly dependent on, other rules of communication within the same community. For instance, an early modern community, such as the 19th century Europe, or Japan not very long ago, is characterized by the predominant role of the written channel in a number of situations where the spoken language would be used within the contemporary type of social structure, (for instance in entertainment situations, reading for pleasure,

expression of deep emotions in a letter rather than by oral communication etc.). Elaborate communication is almost exclusively in written language and the role of the spoken medium is fairly limited. It is not to be wondered at if such early modern communities develop rules of language study which are based on the written rather than the spoken channel. It is not surprising that the reading method developed and persisted in such communities. Further, the communication system of these communities was characterized by the taxonomical function of language, i.e. the use of words in order to fix knowledge and perception of reality. This characteristic results in a predilection for paradigmatic, classificatory systems in science and in the humanities. School grammar is one such system. In it our approach to the grammatical structure of language is forced into a paradigmatic system with clear supporting pillars like word, sentence, nominative, predicate etc. This way of using language is foreign to a contemporary type of community in which reality is accessible for direct observation uninfluenced by the categories of linguistics. Again, as far as typical communication networks are concerned, an early modern community is characterized by the preponderance of so called wheel networks, in which the members are independent from one another and each connected separately and passively with the active pivot. No doubt, this is the picture of a traditional language study class in which the teacher explains and the students are occasionally asked to read a sentence or to provide the meaning of a word. I wish to note here that the most typical problem with teachers of Japanese who are native speakers of the language, and therefore also possess the Japanese system of language study rules, is in their application of this network rule in the Australian classroom: the teacher speaks, the students listen and occasionally ask questions. This is not the only problem derived from the Japanese foreign language study rules: there is, for instance, also the problem of feedback, and testing. The Japanese system of communication lacks the negative feedback ("This is incorrect") even in the teaching

situation and it is not easy to teach a new instructor quickly that he must supply to the learner at each stage information about the correctness of the learner's output. Likewise, tests in the traditional Japanese foreign language study system are rebuses with little connection with feedback, and designed primarily for obtaining a hirerarchy within the group of learners.

These examples will suffice to show that the so called teaching methods are far from being simply improvements on certain techniques. The reading method corresponds to the situation within communication systems of a certain type, and is possibly the best solution for language study in those communities. In the same way, the audio-lingual method was not necessarily an improvement on the older methods, but rather a system of language study rules derived from components of a communication system in which spoken language bears primary importance: taxonomical systems are undesirable, networks prefer non-hierarchical structures, feedback is strong.

3. THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE USE SITUATION

Sociolinguistics does not merely help to define language teaching with greater preciseness. Its second contribution is in the concept of a communicative situation. The foreign language teacher should realize that a situation in which a foreign language is used by one or several of the participants is conceived by native speakers of the language as a situation of a special kind. The communication rules are often modified, and new rules introduced.

Because no data-oriented studies are available I shall limit my remarks to several suggestions. First it seems to me that there is a necessity to define the concept of a foreign speaker and that at least in some communities it will be necessary to distinguish between several types of foreign speakers. A speaker who knows only a few words is accepted in a different manner from a speaker who can communicate with reasonable fluency, and for a nearly native foreign speaker the situation is different again. For instance, as far as their acceptance into

communicative networks is concerned, foreign speakers of Japanese fall at least into two categories: the beginners and the advanced. The beginners are easily accepted, but not assimilated. The advanced foreign speakers, as soon as they reach the stage, often observe that their status has changed. They are no more included in networks qua foreigners, and must go through the same laborious process as any native speaker of the language. Because they still remain highly deviant this is not an easy task, and most students of Japanese complain at this stage about the lack of opportunity to actively use their spoken language.

Situations which are easily identified as foreign speaker situations seem to share in most communities an element of <u>semantic uncertainty</u>. This results in the frequently observed fact that while native speakers are allowed a considerable margin of precision, the foreign speaker is likely to be misunderstood whereever he departs from the expected usage. For instance, all native speakers of Japanese who did not spend their language constitution period in the area around Tokyo, mispronounce, occasionally or systematically, the accent of the standard Japanese language. While these mistakes do not inhibit communication in the case of native speakers, they often do lead to misunderstanding in the case of foreign users.

Perhaps the most relevant fact about the foreign speaker situation can be attributed to the phenomenon of <u>switching</u>. What I have in mind is not so much grammatical switching, but the fact that together with switching from one grammar to another,

(a) switching affects also the peripheral rules of communication (e.g. verbal and non-verbal etiquette, networks etc.),
(b) the peripheral rules of communication can still remain in the native system (e.g. speaking perfect English grammatically but using the native German system of greetings cf. Clyne 1972)
(c) a new system of non-grammatical rules can be developed

(e.g. foreign speakers of English who believe that the party conversation must be witty, native speakers of Japanese who believe that no rules of verbal etiquette exist in English), or finally

(d) the native system of non-grammatical rules is replaced by zero.

The last case probably provides the most relevant data for language teaching; adult foreign speakers of a language who lost control over their bodily movements, facial expression, topics, the rules governing which persons may become participants in communication, etc.

It is further my contention that linguistics can derive substantial profit from realizing that foreign language use situations are, or should also be foreign language acquisition situations. As Oliverius suggests, the present theory and practice of foreign language teaching has over-emphasized the classroom situation and really never developed rules for any other situation where language learning may occur. It may not be exaggerating if we claim that present day language teaching is based on the premise that the teacher is there to teach a closed system of knowledge which is subsequntially put into operation. It ignores the fact that the grammar of a language cannot be fully acquired within the classroom situation, and that learning should continue while the new language is being used. Once a foreign language use situation is accepted also as a learning situation, and rules are developed and taught how to use such a situation for language acquisition, the importance of the classroom situation will necessarily decrease.

4. TEACHING OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Probably the most relevant direct contribution of sociolinguistics to language teaching derives from the recognition of the importance of peripheral (non-langue) rules of communication in what we called in our previous discussion Sociolinguistics III. In other words, it is sociolinguistics which suggests that the peripheral rules of communicative competence should be included among the objectives of

language teaching and that language teaching should accordingly develop from teaching of grammar/lexicon/phonology into teaching of the competence for communication in general.

TEACHING OF CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

In absence of modern sociolinguistic theory at least lip service was paid to the necessity of teaching more than grammar with the teaching of "culture and society" or "cultural understanding" and under the slogan that "language is inseparable from culture".

The failure of this approach was due principally to the undifferentiated concept of culture: it is true that no communication can exist outside culture, but it is also true that there is one section within culture which is of primary importance for communication, namely the system of communicative competence. Compared with rules of communicative competence, a knowledge of the history of the community or of its literature, the two favorite suggestions by devotees of the "cultural understanding" approach can be of only marginal importance. Besides history and literature, the cultural recommendations usually stop at some basic routines, such as greetings, and semantic differences, for instance differences in the emotional overtones of the word 'mother' etc. Only occasionally is a larger selection of non-langue rules considered.

In the following using the example of content rules, I shall attempt to demonstrate that the range of problems that must be treated by language teaching is far broader than what has ever been suggested by the "cultural understanding" approach. Examples are mainly drawn from my own field of Japanese linguistics.

CONTENT RULES

Even if pre-communicational input presents no significant variation, systems of communicative competence can differ in the degree to which individual meanings or types of meanings are

conveyed. The sector of status meanings provides an interesting example. Quite apart from the question of how status is communicated, it is the amount of information about status itself which differs from community to community. In Japanese the concern with status is high; it is lower in French and lowest of all in English. Native speakers of Japanese do not only express status differently, but they express it more often than native speakers of English. No textbook and no course of English tells the Japanese learner that in an entertainment situation conducted in English he is not supposed to convey his lower or higher status to any other participant: he is therefore prone to interrupt communication with his equal when a superior joins the network, place the superior in the position of a pivot, and change from a casual to a more formal style of communication. Another interesting example of the degree to which certain meanings are conveyed is provided by the contact topic. No language teaching system will tell a native speaker of an Indian language or of Japanese that in English it is not usual to find conversational openings which emphasize the common experience or acquaintances of the participants, or the group membership of the speaker, or conversations which elicit information about the group membership of the addressee.

Participants of non-English origin in an act of communication may, and actually do, continue not to notice differences of this kind, even if English is their major or their only language of communication. A Chinese from Singapore, an Indian from Calcutta, without being aware of it, constantly violate English content rules. Native speakers of American English often violate certain content rules of British English and vice versa. The actual instances of rule breaking may escape the analytic attention of the addressee, but usually they are interpreted as communicating about the speaker's personality. The Japanese speaker is marked as "polite to superiors and rude to equals and inferiors". However the speaker's intention may be simply in adhering to his own rules of content. The problem is one of rules of communication,

not of personality.

In a somewhat different direction attempts have recently been made to decipher the mechanism behind our understanding of some illocutionary meanings. This type of problem constitutes another section of content rules which are presumably language-specific and hardly ever will be subject to automatic acquisition. Unless the addressee is a superior the Japanese illocutionary meaning "promise" does for instance include the feature [subject to circumstances at the time of execution]. The frequency of the illocutionary meaning "promise" is lower than in English, e.g. promise is rare in timetabling (appointments etc.). These differences are likely to escape the attention of both the Japanese speaker and his interlocutor. They do carry meanings: what is a clear breach of promise for one is simply a circumstantial interpretation for the other.

I wish to argue that rules of this kind should not merely be registered as relevant topics for sociolinguistic research but that there is the necessity to introduce them into the sphere of language teaching

One warning will not be out of place here. The older "cultural understanding" approach did in several instances require the integration into the teaching process not only of the content rules, e.g. the weather topic in small talk, but also of information concerning its determinants. This can be useful if the determinants are alive, i.e. not merely facts about the history of the system. The Japanese lack of commitment to time arrangements seems to be determined at least partly by the limited role deadlines play in the daily cycle of an individual in general. It is this determinant that is "meant" by the lack of promise, and a promise in the same situation implies the negation of this background. This means that in a sense the determinant forms part of the meaning and should not be left unnoticed. It will however need to be decided separately

for each particular case whether such information is of more basic relevance than information about the social distribution of the rule: some of the weather topics for instance have clear social limitations and these limitations are most important components of the meaning of these topics. The determinants of weather topics in English, on the other hand, seem to be petrified (not alive) and any information about them only confuses the learner.